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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF
UN RESOLUTION 1701

11. SUMMARY: Government daily "Oman" is skeptical that UN Resolution 1701 meets Arab demands, but also says the resolution "restores hope for peace." Private daily "Al Watan" hails the Lebanese military "victory" against Israel, but is wary that Israel's "manipulations" will reduce the potency of that success. END SUMMARY.

COVERAGE

12. Israeli-Hezbollah combat continued to dominate coverage in both Oman's English and Arabic-language press this week, with significant space devoted to graphic images of dead and wounded Lebanese civilians. Funerals of Israeli soldiers were also highlighted in large, often front-page pictures.

BLOCK QUOTES: UN RESOLUTION 1701 "RESTORES HOPE FOR PEACE"

12. In its August 13 editorial, government-owned daily "Oman" (circulation 38,000) commented on the prospect of "Light at the End of the Lebanese Tunnel":

"UN Security Council Resolution 1701 restores hope for peace in Lebanon. Though the resolution called for an immediate ceasefire, Israeli forces continued their military assaults against various areas in Lebanon, neglecting the international community's strong desire to stop the bloodbath... A ceasefire would give humanitarian organizations a chance to reach places that need aid but cannot be reached under fire. Such an agreement opens new horizons for both countries to address the main causes of the conflict and pave the way for establishing a lasting peace for Lebanon and the region as a whole."

RESOLUTION 1701 "UNBALANCED"

13. "Oman" was more skeptical about Resolution 1701 in its August 14 editorial, "Will a Ceasefire Succeed in Lebanon?":

"Some parties believe that UN Security Council Resolution 1701 is unbalanced because it does not meet some Lebanese demands such as the exchange of Lebanese and Palestinian detainees, the issue of Shebaa farms, and Israel's immediate withdrawal from south Lebanon. Although many Arab officials do not believe that the

resolution satisfies Arab demands, they support the Lebanese government's sovereignty within its borders."

A "GREAT LEBANESE VICTORY"

¶4. On August 14 "Al-Watan" (privately owned daily, circulation 42,000) analyzed how the implementation of Resolution 1701 could benefit the Lebanese:

"Lebanon will face a diplomatic war that attempts to grant Israel a victory it didn't win on the battlefield... Interpretations and manipulations of Resolution 1701 could leave it without substance. The first such interpretation was by Israel's foreign minister, who claimed that the resolution demands Hezbollah's disarmament, disregarding that Hezbollah is a vital element in Lebanon's power structure. This great Lebanese victory will dissolve all sectarian differences between Sunnis and Shiites, and Muslims and Christians. All are now Lebanese citizens confronted with Israel's belligerent aggression, committed on behalf of the U.S. for its interests and imperial ambitions. After the cessation of hostilities it should be clear who is holding the strings in this puppet show... Lebanon serves as an example to military academies and strategists on how national resistance without air or naval cover or armored vehicles could gain a sweeping victory against the fourth most powerful army in the world."

GRAPPO